

Lewisham Cyclists (local borough group of the London Cycling Campaign) response to The Royal Parks Movement Strategy public consultation (Mar 2020)

https://www.royalparks.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0015/114216/TheRoyalParks_MovementStrategy.pdf

About Lewisham Cyclists

Lewisham Cyclists (LC) are the local borough group of the London Cycling Campaign (LCC) with more than 1500 supporters of whom over 700 are fully paid-up members of LCC. We speak up on behalf of everyone who cycles or wants to cycle in the London Borough of Lewisham. We seek a greener, healthier, happier and better-connected capital.

General comments on this scheme:

We have a particular interest in Greenwich Park which is right next to the north edge of Lewisham Borough and contains one of Lewisham & Greenwich's key safe cycling routes Quietway 1 (Cycleway 10) which is impacted by night-time closures of the park and through traffic during rush hours.

We were pleased with the results of the phase 1 engagement and noted the very high percentage of responders that were in favour of eliminating commuter traffic and encouraging people not to come by car (overall 78% wanted commuter traffic removed and 79% wanted people to be encouraged to come by bike, on foot or by public transport). Hence we are disappointed that the document appears to water down actions to achieve these aims and treats cycling as a problem rather than an activity to be encouraged.

Specific points:

1. The broad direction of the strategy is welcome but we would argue that the document needs to be much stronger on removing through motor traffic and on enabling and promoting cycling.
2. We need a bold overall action plan with specific targets, and an individual action plan for each park given the large differences in mode share of visitors for even the outer London ones. We are keen to participate in plans for Greenwich Park.
3. Through motor traffic should be eliminated (not 'discouraged') as fast as possible. Through traffic is a hazard for pedestrians and cyclists alike as well as contributing to poor air quality.
4. With 80% of people accessing the parks by walking, cycling and public transport, the use of motor vehicles to access the parks should be deterred, with The Royal Parks proactively supporting and championing improvements to sustainable mode routes to/from parks, and restricting motor vehicle use increasingly.
5. Use of motor vehicles by deliveries and staff working inside the parks (The Royal Parks employees and others) should be rapidly reduced, with The Royal Parks

moving to environmentally and people friendly vehicles like cargo trikes and small electric vehicles.

6. The Royal Parks comes across as particularly negative on cycling in this document. We feel you should promote the use of parks for commuters and leisure riders to avoid hostile main roads, for kids to learn to ride, for sports cyclists to do laps for fitness and leisure, for mums to take kids to school etc. For everyone, in short.
7. This means re-considering currently non-permitted areas as appropriate e.g. considering the opportunity to establish a quiet cycle route along North Walk (on the north edge of Greenwich Park), linking King William Walk to Park Row/Park Vista. Also avoiding creating barriers for any type of cycle in the future, for instance in on-road designs for motor vehicle speed control or on paths to encourage considerate cycling behaviour.
8. The document should reflect London's crises around climate, air quality, inactivity/obesity and mental health. The Royal Parks should seek to be more proactive on these and other related issues.
9. Although the strategy is set for five years, we would urge actions to be taken sooner where possible, in Greenwich Park specifically:
 - a. To work to close Greenwich Park to through traffic at all times as a matter of priority.
 - b. To look at locking strategies for Greenwich Park to see if cycle access gates could be left open from at least 6am to 8pm (and preferably 24/7) throughout the year avoiding the need for cyclists on Quietway 1 (Cycleway 10) from having to divert onto more dangerous local roads.
 - c. Provide more cycle parking throughout Greenwich Park.

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General points about provision of cycle infrastructure:

- The Mayor's Transport Strategy relies on a growth in cycle trips to keep London moving. Providing space for cycling is a more efficient use of road space than providing space for driving private motor vehicles, particularly for journeys of 5km or less. In terms of providing maximum efficiency for space and energy use, walking, cycling, then public transport are key.
- Spending money on cycling infrastructure has been shown to dramatically boost health outcomes in an area. Spending on cycling schemes outranks all other transport modes for return on investment according to a DfT study. Schemes which promote cycling meet TfL's "Healthy Streets" checklist. A healthy street is one where people choose to walk and cycle.

- All schemes should be designed to enable people of all ages and abilities to cycle, including disabled people.
- Evidence from TfL and from many schemes in London, the UK and worldwide shows the economic benefits, including to businesses, to be found from enabling a wider range of people to cycle more. Further evidence shows how cycling schemes also benefit air quality and reduce climate changing emissions, as well as improving resident health outcomes and reducing inactivity, as mentioned above.